

Message Text

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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 CAIRO 14818

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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS PINT EG
SUBJ: TALK WITH SADAT RE PUBLIC SABRE RATTLING AND
DELIBERALIZATION POLICIES

SUMMARY: RAISED WITH SADAT, JUNE 11, NEGATIVE AMERICAN
PUBLIC REACTION TO HIS RECENT PUBLIC STATEMENTS ON THE WAR
OPTION AND HIS DELIBERALIZATION CAMPAIGN, ESPECIALLY
SUGGESTIONS THAT HE MIGHT RESTRICT PRESS ON INDIVIDUAL
JOURNALISTS. SADAT SAID HE HAD EXPECTED ME RAISE MATTER.
ALLUDING TO BEGIN'S STATEMENTS RE SADAT WAR OPTION COMMENTS,
HE CALLED THESE DELIBERATE DISTORTIONS AND SAID HE HAD
EARLIER IN THE DAY MADE A SPEECH TO AIR FORCE TRAINING
SCHOOL SETTING RECORD STRAIGHT. HIS SECOND AND THIRD ARMY
SPEECHES HAD EMPHASIZED HIS CONTINUING DESIRE FOR PEACE.
EGYPT PREPARED GIVE ISRAEL PEACE AND SECURITY, BUT REFUSES
SURRENDER TERRITORY AND SOVEREIGNTY. IF ISRAELIS REGARD
THIS AS BELLIGERENT, THEY ARE FREE TO DO SO. RE DELIBERAL-
IZATION, SADAT INSISTED THAT HE HAD DEMOCRATIZED EGYPTIAN
POLITICAL SCENE AGAINST ADVICE OF MANY OF HIS CLOSEST
COUNSELLORS WHO ARGUED EGYPT NOT READY FOR DEMOCRACY.
WAFD AND LEFTISTS HAD ABUSED DEMOCRACY. LEFTISTS ARE
MOSCOW STOOGES, WHOM HE INTENDS TO ELIMINATE. THEY ARE
SEIZING UPON EGYPT'S CURRENT ECONOMIC PROBLEMS IN ORDER
INCITE MASSES TO DEMONSTRATE AND REVOLT. TO FRUSTRATE HIS
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CRITICS, HE WILL SHORTLY ANNOUNCE A "SURPRISE" DESIGNED
TO "CONSOLIDATE DEMOCRACY IN THE COUNTRY." HE WOULD NOT
ELABORATE. SADAT SAID AMERICAN AND FOREIGN JOURNALISTS
WILL NOT BE TOUCHED. HE WANTS FREE PRESS, BUT IT MUST
ALSO BE RESPONSIBLE. END SUMMARY.

1. IN MY MEETING YESTERDAY IN ALEXANDRIA WITH SADAT (VP

MUBARAK WAS PRESENT), I SAID I WISHED TO DISCUSS TWO SENSITIVE MATTERS WITH HIM. I WISHED TO DO SO IN THE CONTEXT OF THE POSITIVE CONGRESSIONAL AND PUBLIC IMAGE WHICH HE HAD GAINED IN THE UNITED STATES BECAUSE OF HIS PEACE INITIATIVE AND HIS LIBERALIZATION OF THE EGYPTINA POLITICAL SCENE. THIS POSITIVE PUBLIC IMAGE HAS BEEN OF INESTIMABLE VALUE TO PRESIDENT CARGER AND THE ADMINISTRATION IN SUPPORTING THE PEACE PROCESS AND IN SUCH MATTERS AS OBTAINING APPROVAL FOR THE RECENT AIRCRAFT SALE. AS I HAD FREQUENTLY TOLD HIM, HE IS OWN BEST PUBLIC RELATIONS MAN AND I KNEW FROM PERSONAL EXPERIENCE THE MAJOR ROLE HE HAD PLAYED IN WINNING AMERICAN CONGRESSIONAL AND PUBLIC SUPPORT AND UNDERSTANDING.

2. I HAD TO TELL HIM FRANKLY, HOWEVER, THAT SOME OF HIS RECENT PUBLIC STATEMENTS ON THE WAR OPTION HAVE BEEN INTERPRETED AS SABRE RATTLING AND WEAKEN AMERICAN CONGRESSIONAL AND PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR PRESIDENT CARTER'S EFFORTS. THE SAME IS TRUE OF HIS RECENT DELIBERALIZATION CAMPAIGN AND PARTICULARLY SUGGESTIONS THAT HE MIGHT BE ACTING AGAINST THE PRESS AND INDIVUAL JOURNALISTS. HAVING JUST RETURNED FROM THREE WEEKS IN THE UNITED STATES, DURING WHICH I HAD VISITED NOT ONLY WASHINGTON BUT VARIOUS OTHER CITIES, I COULD ATTEST TO THE QUESTIONS THAT HIS STATEMENTS AND ACTIONS ARE RAISING AMONG PEOPLE WHO ARE HIS ADMIRERS. CLEARLY HE WAS THE BEST JUDGE OF HIS
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DOMESTIC POLITICAL SITUATION, BUT WE WOULD BE DOING HIM A DISSERVICE IF WE FAILED TO INVITE HIS ATTENTION TO THE NEGATIVE AMERICAN CONGRESSIONAL AND PUBLIC REACTION TO SOME OF THE MEASURES THAT HE HAD TAKEN. AS HE KNEW, THE AMERICAN PUBLIC MEDIA, WHCIH HAS STEADILY COME TO SUPPORT HIM IN THE PAST TWO YEARS, IS VERY SENSITIVE TO RESTRICTIONS ON PRESS FREEDOMS ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD.

3. SADAT DID NOT TAKE MY COMMENTS AMISS. IN FACT, HE SAID THAT HE HAD EXPECTED I WOULD RAISE WITH HIM THE MATTER OF HIS PUBLIC STATEMENTS TO THE SECOND AND THIRD ARMIES ABOUT THE WAR OPTION. (VP MUBARAK LATER TOLD ME THAT SADAT HAD RECEIVED A MESSAGE FROM GAMASY INDICATING THAT PRESIDENT CARTER HAD RAISED THE MATTER WITH HIM.) HE NOTED THAT BEGIN HAD SEIZED UPON HIS STATEMENTS TO THE SECOND AND THIRD ARMIES AND HAD CHARGED THAT SADAT IS AGAIN "BLOWING THE BUGLE OF WAR." THIS WAS A DELIBERATE DISTORTION ON BEGIN'S PART. ISRAEL, SADAT CONTENDED, HAS SOUGHT TO DISTROY VIRTUALLY EVERYTHING HE HAD SAID THESE PAST FOUR YEARS. IN ORDER TO REFUTE BEGIN'S CHARGE, HE HAD IN A SPEECH EARLIER THAT SAME DAY TO THE OFFICERS AND MEN OF THE AIR FORCE TRAINING SCHOOL AT BILBAYS SOUGHT

TO SET THE RECORD STRAIGHT.

4. AS WE KNEW, HIS SECOND AND THIRD ARMY SPEECHES HAD EMPHASIZED HIS CONTINUING DESIRE FOR PEACE HIS REFERENCES TO MILITARY ACTION HAD BEEN MADE SOLELY IN THE CONTEXT OF IF THE PEACE PROCESS FAILED. IN HIS SPEECH EARLIER IN THE DAY HE HAD MADE THE POINT THAT ISRAELI PROPAGANDA HAD LABELED HIS EARLIER SPEECHES AS AGAIN SPEAKING OF WAR. AS HE HAD SAID TO WEIZMAN DURING LATTER'S VISIT TO EGYPT, HE CONTINUES TO WORK FOR PEACE BASED ON JUSTICE. EGYPT'S MIND AND HEART ARE OPEN TO ANY NEW ELEMENTS IN THE ISRAELI POSITION, WHICH CAN BE DISCUSSED TO SEE WHETHER THEY OFFER A BASIS FOR A JUST PEACE. EGYPT, HE HAD REITERATED, IS PREPARED TO GIVE ISRAEL PEACE AND SECURITY, BUT REFUSES TO SECRET

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SURRENDER TERRITORY OR SOVERIEGNTY. IF ISRAELIS CONSIDER THAT AS SOUNDING THE WAR TOCSIN, THEY ARE FREE TO DO SO. (SADATS PERTINENT REMARKS BEING SENT SEPTTEL.

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5. ON THE MATTER OF DELIBERALIZATION SADAT INSISTED THAT ANYONE WHO KNOWS ANYTHING ABOUT EGYPT WILL BE AWARE OF HOW FAR HE HAS GONE TO FREE THE EGYPTIAN POLITICAL SCENE. HE HAS DONE SO AGAINST THE ADVICE OF MANY OF HIS CLOSEST COUNSELLORS, WHO ARGUED THAT EGYPT IS NOT YET READY FOR DEMOCRACY. HE WANTED PRESIDENT CARTER AND THE ADMINISTRATION TO KNOW THAT HE REMAINS COMMITTED TO THE CONCEPT OF

DEMOCRATIZING EGYPT. THE DEMOCRACY WHICH HE HAD GRANTED HAD BEEN ABUSED BY THE WAFDISTS AND THE LEFTIST PARTY. HE STRESSED THAT HE HAD NOT DISSOLVED THE WAFD, IT HAD TAKEN THIS STEP ON ITS OWN IN AN EFFORT TO EMBARRASS HIM. THE LEFTISTS WERE SOMETHING ELSE. THEY ARE MOSCOW'S "STOOGES". THE LEFT HAS SUSPENDED ITSELF, BUT HE INTENDS TO "ELIMINATE" IT AS A PARTY.

6. AT THAT POINT VP MUBARAK INTERJECTED THAT LEFTIST LEADER ISMAIL SABRI ABDALLAH HAD TOLD FRIENDS THAT THE LEFTISTS INTEND TO WORK UNDERGROUND. SADAT SAID LET THEM DO SO. THEIR PURPOSE HAD NOT CHANGED. THE LEFTISTS ARE DELIBERATELY SEIZING UPON EGYPT'S CURRENT ECONOMIC WOES IN ORDER TO INCITE THE MASSES TO DEMONSTRATE AND REVOLT. THIS, SADAT EMPHASIZED, HE CANNOT TOLERATE. AS WE KNEW, HE IS INVOLVED IN A RISKY PEACE PROCESS AND DOES NOT INTEND TO BE STABBED IN THE BACK BY MOSCOW-ORIENTED LEFTISTS IN THE PROCESS.

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7. SADAT WENT ON TO SAY THAT HE HAD RECENTLY ANNOUNCED THAT THERE WILL SHORTLY BE A "SURPRISE." THIS, HE TOLD ME, WILL HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH FOREIGN POLICY, BUT WILL FOCUS ON DOMESTIC MATTERS. IT WILL, AS HE DESCRIBED IT, "CONSOLIDATE DEMOCRACY IN THE COUNTRY." HE HAD NOT YET DECIDED THE TIMING, BUT THOUGHT IT WILL BE LATER THIS MONTH OR JULY. THE TIMING WILL BE AFFECTED BY THE ACTIONS OF THE LEFTIST PARTY IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS. HIS "SURPRISE" WILL ENSURE THAT DEMOCRACY IS IN EGYPT TO STAY. HE GAVE NO CLUE AS TO WHAT HE HAS IN MIND.

8. ON THE MATTER OF JOURNALISTS, SADAT SAID WE COULD BE ASSURED THAT AMERICAN AND FOREIGN JOURNALISTS WILL NOT BE TOUCHED. (OUR SOUNDINGS SUGGEST MOST AMERICAN AND OTHER FOREIGN JOURNALISTS ARE NOT WORRIED--SEPTEL.) HE WANTED A FREE PRESS, BUT IT MUST ALSO BE A RESPONSIBLE PRESS. HE SAID THAT HE UNDERSTOOD OUR COMMENTS AND THE SPIRIT IN WHICH THEY WERE OFFERED. HE HOPED THAT THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT, PUBLIC AND MEDIA WILL MAKE A REAL EFFORT TO UNDERSTAND THE EGYPTIAN SITUATION AND THE REASONS FOR SOME OF THE ACTIONS HE HAS HAD TO TAKE IN THE INTERESTS OF DOMESTIC SECURITY. HE WOULD OF COURSE BEAR OUR COMMENTS IN MIND, BUT HE WAS GLAD WE AGREED THAT HE IS IN THE BEST SITUATION TO JUDGE THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE EGYPTIAN DOMESTIC SITUATION.

9. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH SADAT MADE NO SPECIFIC COMMITMENT TO CHANGE HIS POLICIES, HE GOT THE MESSAGE. HE IS CLEARLY OUTRAGED ABOUT LEFTIST (AND PARTICULARLY AL AHALI)

ATTACKS AND IS DETERMINED TO DEAL WITH THE LEFT. INTER-
ESTINGLY ENOUGH, HE SHOWED NO PARTICULAR ANIMOSITY TOWARD
THE WAFD. HIS UPCOMING "SURPRISE", HE BELIEVES, WILL
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PROVE TO ALL HIS COMMITMENT TO A DEMOCRATIC EGYPT.
NEITHER HE NOR MUBARAK WOULD GIVE ANY HINT AS TO WHAT
EXACTLY HE HAS IN MIND, BUT SADAT OBVIOUSLY FEELS WELL
SATISFIED THAT HIS GREAT IDEA, WHATEVER IT MAY BE,
WILL PROVE TO SKEPTICS AT HOME AND ABROAD THAT GOE
REMAINS ON DEMOCRATIC COURSE.

19. DEPT MAY WISH PASS THIS MESSAGE TO TEL AVIV. EILTS

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